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RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MINSK 000747

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BO](#)

SUBJECT: YOUTH MOVEMENT CHAIR DEFIANT AHEAD OF SHOW TRIALS

REF: A. MINSK 733

[1](#)B. MINSK 457

Classified By: Charge Jonathan Moore for reason 1.4 (d).

[1](#)1. (C) On August 31, Charge and Poloff met with opposition youth organization Malady Front (MF) Chair Dmitriy (Zmitser) Fedaruk on the eve of the trials of three MF regional leaders (ref A). When Charge pledged the Embassy's presence at the trials, Fedaruk expressed his deepest gratitude to the Embassy for its unwavering moral support during his own recent trial on the same charge and credited the United States with his freedom (ref B). The 18-year-old opposition leader observed that the USG's attention-raising efforts were particularly important now because of noticeably less active support currently for MF from Belarus' democratic opposition parties than he received during his trial. Fedaruk added that apart from MF founder and Belarusian Christian Democracy Party (BCDP) Co-Chair Pavel Severinets, opposition movement "For Freedom" leader Aleksandr Milinkevich is the only major opposition leader to visit with Fedaruk's indicted MF compatriots.

[1](#)2. (C) Turning to opposition politics, Charge noted that MF had recently signed cooperation agreements with BCDP and "For Freedom" and asked whether MF intended to become a part of those organizations. Acknowledging a very close relationship between MF and BCDP and reiterating MF's strong support for Milinkevich, Fedaruk unequivocally pledged that MF would always remain an independent youth organization separate from partisan politics. Fedaruk further distanced MF from the parties by expressing ambivalence about the 2008 parliamentary elections. Fedaruk intimated that his organization might boycott the elections, especially if MF senses that the United Democratic Forces would simply withdraw its candidates days before the election. Recalling how the GOB had stolen previous elections, Fedaruk wondered aloud if democracy might be better served if Belarusians went to the square instead of the polls. Charge countered, noting that the political parties saw the campaign season as an important opportunity to s peak to the general public.

Comment

[1](#)3. (C) Throughout the meeting, the young opposition leader's thoughts clearly remained with his persecuted compatriots. In this context, his current frustration with political parties and election campaigns is understandable. Nevertheless, Fedaruk's poise and determination are inspiring; he was remarkably upbeat, and invited the Embassy to help mark Malady Front's 10th anniversary on September 6. We will continue our efforts to drum up more moral support for the indicted activists by attending their trials scheduled for September 4 and 10.
Moore